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freed from the degrading gossip concerning personal motives and character, and the compromising and contradictory stories of newspaper "interviewers," which are now the bane and the shame of American politics.

From whatever point we view it, therefore, in its collateral as well as in its direct consequences, a reform of the civil service promises nothing but good, and we may reasonably hope to see the day when the present opponents of the reform will be anxious to hide from public notice the fact that they tried to prevent those who (to use again the language of the English statesman) would withdraw patronage from the dominion of party and give it to the people.

JACOB D. COX.

ART. V. — *Histoire de la Prusse depuis la Mort de Frédéric II.* Par EUG. VÉRON. Paris: Baillièrè. 1867.

La Prusse contemporaine et ses Institutions. Par M. K. HILLEBRAND. Paris: Baillièrè. 1867.

THERE is probably no nation of Europe whose early successes were less popular than those of Prussia. From the first her position has had a good deal of the *parvenu* about it; and it was only under the pressure of necessity that the great powers sullenly recognized her as one of themselves. The sympathies of the European peoples, again, were unanimously against her. The conservative among them were too closely drawn towards Austria not to catch some prejudice against her rival; and liberals turned with repugnance from a power which, to their eyes, personified absolutism in its hardest and least attractive form, — military absolutism.

Why Prussia should have had, at any one epoch of her history, the particular frontiers then pertaining to her, rather than other frontiers, depended upon the political contingencies of the times, and upon nothing else. She annexed Silesia and Glatz in 1742, because, thanks to the military genius of the Great Frederick, she was strong enough to annex them. In 1744 she seized hold of Eastern Friesland for the same

good old reason; and her share in the sundry infamous partitions of Poland did not certainly rest on any better title. When the Great Frederick ascended the throne in 1740, he found Prussia with an area of eight thousand seven hundred and forty-four square geographical miles, and a population of barely two millions and a quarter. At his death, in 1786, he bequeathed to his successor more than double the number of subjects, and a territory more than half as large again.

At the Congress of Vienna Prussia was enabled, by the prominent part she had taken in the overthrow of Napoleon, to vindicate a claim to further acquisitions. Her population was thus raised to ten millions, and her position among the first-class powers was firmly established. In the concessions made to her, however, the jealousy of her copartners in the European pentarchy was strikingly evident. With no natural frontiers, she found herself separated by the intrusion of jealous Hanover, and of Hesse, into two distinct masses, and was brought, by her sprawling configuration, into direct contact with all her most dangerous competitors, — Russia and Austria on one side, and France on the other. By the surrender of East Friesland she lost her position on the North Sea. Saxony, by Prussia's appropriation of half its territory, was thrown into the arms of Austria, and the cession to Bavaria of the Franconian principalities deprived the Hohenzollerns of the best affected of their subjects, while the Gallicized, Roman Catholic provinces of the Rhine, taken in exchange, presented every obstacle to amalgamation.

That special providence, however, which seems to have watched over Prussia from her cradle, turned these apparent elements of weakness into aids towards a yet higher destiny. The northern and eastern portions, which she had lost, were chiefly inhabited by Slavonians, and their excision left Prussia all the more purely a German power. Her irregular outline and extended ramifications multiplied her points of contact with the German-speaking peoples around her; and her position, facing Russia on the east and France on the west, gave her, in conjunction with her military prestige, the character of the proper defender of Northern Germany, and made her the indispensable accomplice of all patriotic aspirations.

The primary identification of Prussian interests with those of Germany had commenced, however, still earlier than the Congress of Vienna. It had commenced in 1813, when Frederick William III., conscious that the rush of the patriotic tide left him no alternative between floating upon it or sinking beneath it, yielded to the arguments of Stein, and signed, with Russia, the treaty of Kalisch (February 28th), — an offensive and defensive alliance, having the restoration of the Prussian Monarchy to its original status as an explicit aim, and being, therefore, tantamount to a declaration of war against France.

It is no exaggeration to assert that the germs of the characteristic military system of Prussia, of her constitutional development, and even of her present position as the representative of the idea of German unity, were sown and fostered under the pressure and by the direct incentive of the first Napoleon's cruel and contemptuous treatment of his fallen foe, — a treatment which one of the French writers before us states to have "left behind it miseries of which many were incurable, and hatreds which half a century of peace has failed to eradicate."

One of the provisions of the Treaty of Tilsitt (July, 1807), which followed the disastrous defeats of Jena and Auerstädt, prohibited Prussia from maintaining a larger standing army than forty-two thousand men. General Scharnhorst, who was at the time Minister of War, contrived to neutralize this prohibition by annually eliminating from the ranks a certain number of men whose training was completed, and replacing them by recruits. The army in this way became, as it actually remains, a military school through which all the citizens passed in turn, a sort of provisional furlough retaining them, for a fixed time after their discharge, at the disposition of the state.* Thus, and under this incentive, was created that formidable *Landwehr* system, which has been, probably, the most efficient instrument in inflicting upon France and the Napoleonic dynasty to-day's terrible retribution.

But Prussia needed something more than an efficient army. Her utter collapse after Jena clearly proved that the solid

* The reserve thus created contributed seventy thousand first-class soldiers to the desperate battle-fields of 1813.

foundations of a national structure were wanting. The masses were, in the country, little better than serfs; in the towns, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, having no part whatever in the state organism, and therefore utterly indifferent to its political welfare. Fortunately, however, for Prussia in this her darkest hour, the helm of state was surrendered to a man whose surpassing ability was equal even to that surpassing emergency. This man was the Baron von Stein (born at Nassau, October, 1757), a statesman of indomitable energy, of the purest patriotism, and of rare grasp of thought and freedom from class prejudices.* Stein laid his finger at once upon the fundamental defect in Prussian policy to which we have referred, — the absence of a popular basis, — and set himself resolutely to its rectification. Three great reforms were immediately inaugurated, embracing the tenure of land, the municipal charters, and the internal regulations of the army. The edict of October, 1807, swept away all the feudal obligations resting on the peasantry, and made manors purchasable by commoners of any degree.† Trade at the same time was declared not to be derogatory to a noble, and intermarriages between members of the aristocracy and of the burgher class were permitted without preliminary sanction from the crown. The hateful distinctions of caste were thus undermined. The edict of November, 1808, restored to the citizens of towns their ancient privileges, authorizing all who were rated to a certain amount, without distinction of birth or creed, to take part in the election of the municipal authorities. At the same time commissions in the army were thrown open to all, as the recompense of good service and of personal merit.

There is no doubt that, had the opportunity been given him, Stein would have “crowned the edifice” with a regular representative system. But the despot of France, who had made himself the despot of Germany also, and seemed to take special pleasure in outraging and humiliating Prussia, soon per-

* Pertz's *Life of Stein (Leben des Minist. Freiherrn von Stein, Berlin, 1851)* is one of the most valuable aids to a comprehension of the history of Continental Europe, during the first quarter of this century, to which the student can be referred.

† M. Véron (*Hist. de la Prusse*, p. 179) errs in extending the terms of this edict to landed property in general (*bien-fonds*). The German term used is distinctly *Rittergüter*.

ceived that Stein was one of the most dangerous of his enemies, and speedily contrived to force upon him a resignation.* On quitting office the Minister addressed to all Prussian functionaries an eloquent circular, in which the following remarkable passage occurs: "All the representative systems hitherto tried among us have been defective. The new plan I had adopted was the following: Every active citizen, whether possessed of one acre of land or of one hundred acres, whether agriculturist or manufacturer, whether exercising an independent profession or a public charge, — every active citizen should have the right of suffrage and be represented in the councils of his king."

For the times, this plan was a remarkably liberal one. Its publication gave an immense stimulus to the demand for constitutional government, and the king, in his sore distress, seized upon this growing sentiment as an aid to raise the popular enthusiasm to a still higher pitch. In 1810 his new Minister, Hardenberg, published an edict subjecting the nobility to all state burdens, and promising to the people "an equitably established representative system as well in the provinces as for the whole kingdom." This promise was formally renewed in the royal decree of May, 1815, which explicitly fixed the 1st of the following September for the assembling of a constituent commission.

The constitution of Prussia had hitherto been a pure autocracy, unmodified even by the "state assemblies" (*Staatsvereine*) which existed in some of the other parts of Germany. The ministers, possessing no personal responsibility, were mere royal secretaries, and the entire civil service, as a natural consequence, was purely mechanical in its action, offering no proper field for intellect or ability. This civil service, ramified throughout every

* Stein was about to leave Berlin for Breslau when the new French Minister to the Prussian Court arrived, carrying with him the following incredibly outrageous decree: —

1. Le nommé Stein, cherchant à exciter des troubles en Allemagne, est déclaré ennemi de la France et de la Confédération du Rhin.

2. Les biens que ledit Stein posséderait, soit en France soit dans les pays de la Confédération du Rhin, seront sequestrés. Ledit Stein sera saisi de sa personne partout où il pourra être atteint par nos troupes ou celles de nos alliés.

NAPOLÉON.

Le 16:h Décembre, 1808.

province and constituted a model specimen of that bureaucratic system, which was one of the worst products of the growth of absolutism in the eighteenth century.* The nobility, deprived of its former political power, had become a mere privileged class, entirely distinct from the people. With singular want of judgment, all the children alike succeeded to the paternal title, so that the descendants of a prince or a baron, however remote the ramification, were all princes or barons. Hence a host of aristocratic paupers who, being forbidden to “degrade themselves” by trade, came upon the state for support. All commissions in the army belonged exclusively to them, and all the best posts in the civil service were virtually monopolized by them.† Stipends were assigned to their sons, marriage gifts to their daughters, and dowries to their widows, while those who held any portion of the paternal estate had no difficulty in obtaining loans and donations, under the pretext of “the improvement of agriculture.” In order to bolster up the dignity of these aristocratic proletaires, all sorts of absurd social distinctions were conferred upon them. A commoner convicted of assaulting or abusing a nobleman was treated as a criminal, and might be punished by flogging, while in the reverse case a simple fine was incurred. Officers in criminal cases were subject to military tribunals only, and nobles found guilty of felony, etc. were “degraded” to the rank of commoners! ‡

We have seen how Stein and Hardenberg (who, for a short time only, continued Stein’s policy) took the first steps to destroy this miserable system, already opposed to the spirit of the age, and to prepare Prussia for a constitutional *régime*. But the reaction of the aristocracy against their reforms was violent, and, unfortunately for the country, the king, in spite of

* There is no census of the civil service of Prussia at the date we are writing about, but in 1867 it numbered 38,067 persons.

† The Prussian code says, in so many words, “in filling up public offices the nobility have the preference.”

‡ Stein — himself, be it remembered, an aristocrat — thus describes the nobility of his day: “They are uneducated, needy (*hülfsbedürftig*), presumptuous, pushing themselves into all offices, from that of marshal down to postmaster and city inspector, standing in the way of all the other burgher classes by filching these offices from them and by the pretensions they put forward, and yet sinking far below them by their poverty, their intermarriages, and their deficient culture.”

his solemn liberal promises, was heart and soul on the anti-liberal side.

Frederick William III. was a man of simple tastes and good private character, well-intentioned, and, considering his position, tolerably free from prejudice. But the disasters of his reign brought all his worst points into relief and threw the better into shadow. Whenever there was question of decisive action he always let the opportune moment slip by. If the triumph of a great principle or the adoption of an important measure inconsistent with his own narrow views came under discussion, he showed a resistive power of almost inexhaustible energy. It is just possible that, amid the excitement of war, the bewildered king may have been unconscious of the true import of his promises to his people ; but no such excuse can be extended to the deliberate renewal of these promises after the war was over. Nevertheless, the 1st of September, 1815, passed without any further mention of the constituent commission, and it took two years of impassioned popular remonstrance to force upon the crown even this mere preliminary measure. When the commission actually met (in 1817), its action was so slow and the results obtained so nugatory, that popular opinion turned away, disgusted. Meanwhile the establishment of representative institutions in other parts of Germany rendered Prussia's backwardness all the more irritating, and speedily generated the very disaffection which the government professed most to deprecate. Secret political societies began to form themselves, and at a general gathering of students, held at an old castle on the Wartburg, near Eisenach (October 18, 1817), to celebrate simultaneously the Reformation and the battle of Leipsic, the tricolor of the Holy Empire was displayed as the symbol of German unity, and some anti-liberal books were flung upon a bonfire in imitation, probably, of Luther's burning of the papal bull.

To the guilty conscience of the Prussian king, whose estimate, moreover, of the force of popular movements was naturally excessive, this child's play was full of terrors. Prince Hardenberg, accompanied by the Austrian Envoy to Berlin, Count Zichy, made an ostentatious visit to the Grand Duke of Weimar upon the subject of these Wartburg proceedings,

and, to make matters worse, the Czar (whose daughter had become Queen of Prussia that very year) must needs have a finger in the matter, to liberal Germany's intense indignation and disgust. At the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle — which met in the following year to terminate the occupation of France, and solidify, as the great powers fondly imagined, the edifice of the Holy Alliance — one of Alexander's representatives, M. de Stourdza, handed in a lengthy memorandum, directing the attention of the German sovereigns to the fact that the dangerous idea of German unity was fostered in their universities, and calling upon them to put it summarily down. The students of Jena (with whom the Wartburg festival had originated) were furious at M. de Stourdza's memorandum and sent the writer a collective challenge. Meanwhile it leaked out that the popular dramatist, Kotzebue, — a man who had already deserved sufficiently ill of his country by naturalizing upon her stage French immorality under the cloak of German sentimentalism, — was the agent by whom Alexander was kept regularly and secretly supplied with notes upon German internal affairs and upon the political leanings of her prominent men. The burning indignation created by this discovery seized upon a young theological student of Jena, named Sand, whose patriotic enthusiasm had already reached the highest exaltation. In this mental condition he started for Mannheim, where Kotzebue resided, introduced himself into the Russian spy's house, and stabbed him to the heart with a dagger which he afterwards turned, ineffectually, against his own breast. The fact that a deed of this kind should be exalted as an act of the purest patriotism, and its author glorified as a martyr, speaks volumes for the unnatural state of tension into which the intelligent classes of Germany had been forced. As usual, however, instead of opening their eyes to the lesson and the warning it contained, the rulers saw in all this nothing but a justification of their repressive policy and a pretext for its aggravation. A congress of the confederate princes met for consultation at Carlsbad (July, 1819) and there agreed upon a series of illiberal measures against the freedom of the press and the independence of the universities, which were afterwards incorporated, with force of law, in the Final Act (*Schluss-Acte*) of the

Frankfort Diet, — as thoroughly “obscurantist” a document as recent history has to show.*

One of the Carlsbad resolutions had instituted a “central committee of investigation,” to ferret out the secret conspiracy with which Sand was supposed to have been in league, and to bring all concerned to justice. The secret conspiracy proved to be a dream, but the committee, for all that, filled the prisons with young students arrested on the most trivial pretext, — a private expression of opinion or a patriotic song, — and dismissed or suspended some of the ablest and most influential professors whom the country could boast.†

The part played by the universities in the modern history of Germany is unique. The Germany so eloquently described by Madame de Staël is almost purely an intellectual entity, because these representative institutions were then wholly indifferent to politics. But when the country woke to self-consciousness beneath the ruthless grip of France, the universities, as the true centres of national life, were all aglow with patriotic enthusiasm, and the professor’s chair resounded with the burning eloquence which belongs elsewhere to the parliamentary tribune.‡ This peculiar position of the universities

* The Final Act, by establishing the federal right to interfere in cases of popular movement, destroyed altogether the independence of the smaller German states. The limitation of the freedom of the press, and the recognition of the “supreme governing chief of the state” as exempt from all popular control, were among its leading principles.

† Among others, the veteran poet Arndt, of Bonn, the metaphysician Frees of Jena, and the celebrated natural historian Oken. Görres, too, whose eloquent pen had powerfully fomented the national enthusiasm against France, was compelled to take refuge from arrest in Switzerland. His special offence was a fiery pamphlet, “Germany and the Revolution,” in which the presiding powers were warned of the troubles they were preparing.

‡ In order clearly to appreciate the status of the German universities, it is necessary to know that these institutions are almost entirely self-governed, each having its own peculiar constitution and distinct revenues. Their relations with the Minister are maintained by a curator, chosen by the crown among the notables of the province, whose influence over the internal administration is little more than nominal. This administration is carried on by a rector and a senate (*Senatus Academicus*), elected annually by the General Council of titular professors. This Senate dispenses justice in all cases whose gravity exceeds the competence of the university judge (*Syndic*), who, however, takes rank as a counsellor of the court of appeals. The professors are selected by government out of three candidates submitted by the faculty, and these candidates are taken, as a rule, among either the extraordinary professors or the *Privat-docenten*, the latter an institution peculiar,

was so well understood, that Frederick William, in the very midst of his gravest troubles, created in 1810 the university of Berlin, specially as a fresh radiating point of the spirit of independence which it was his direct interest at that period to encourage.

But now that this spirit of independence had become irksome and objectionable, why not use the same powerful machinery to put it down, instead of building it up? This idea was too obvious not to present itself to the counsellors of Frederick William, and a most elaborate attempt was early made to carry it out. Frederick William's University of Berlin was of course the grand field for this experiment, and hither, by a skilful choice, the philosopher Hegel was summoned to fill the place of the departed Fichte. The transcendentalism of the latter — misty enough in all conscience! — had been corrected, practically at least, by the pressure of the stern realities around him, and the picture of the patriotic metaphysician descending from his chair to test, at the head of his own class, the reconciliation of the grand "subject-object" theory with hard fact on the field of Leipsic, is probably familiar to all my readers. It may fairly be presumed that, under similar circumstances, Professor Hegel might have acted similarly. As it was, however, his influence worked in the opposite direction. Metaphysical speculations became the passion of the youth of Germany, and from these speculations the material element — the unsympathetic world of trivial realities — gradually faded away altogether. In the dialectical *tours de force* which form one of the chief attractions of this branch of study, Hegel was unsurpassed, probably unsurpassable; and his popularity with the young students was proportionate. Applied to politics, his system translated itself into the suppression of history and an absolute contempt for facts. The Deity is simply the eternal Idea "in and for itself" (*an und für sich*), and of this eternal Idea the world is an emanation,

we believe, to the German university. While the ordinary professor is bound to lecture on the branch to which he is appointed, the extraordinary professor and privat-docent may choose their own subjects without restriction, and the student can (under certain technical limitations) choose his own professor. Thus the liberty both of teaching and learning (*Lehr und Lernfreiheit*) is absolute, and the science of to-day is brought into constant competition with the science of yesterday.

destined to be the theatre of its own development, the last and highest form of which is monarchy. As the phases of this development are fixed and inevitable, it follows that "whatever is real is right" (*alles Wirkliche ist vernünftig*), and hence that all tendencies to change and reform are opposed to the eternal fitness of things. In the same direction as Hegel, though from a different starting-point, worked the philologist Lachmann, who brought to bear upon the Nibelungenlied, then at the zenith of its popularity, as a pure manifestation of the old German spirit, the same analytical pedantry which Wolff had applied to Homer. The mediæval epic was satisfactorily proved to be a mere patchwork of old ballads, altogether destitute of unity of inspiration, and Herr Lachmann's followers had so much the less food for that enthusiastic Germanism which had provoked the disapproval of the Czar! The immense reputation of Alexander von Humboldt, whose lectures drew old and young, noble and commoner, native and foreigner, around him, but who was essentially cosmopolitan in his views, and even used French in preference to German, had an indirect influence of a similar kind, all helping to divert the intelligent popular mind from political questions, and to facilitate, so it was fondly imagined, the desired restoration of the ancient *régime*.

But Frederick William was not contented with setting others to work. He must needs have a shoulder to the wheel himself, and he made his special department religion. In September, 1817, on the occasion of the third jubilee of the Reformation, he published an edict calling upon the Lutheran and Reformed Churches to forget their ancient strife, and unite to found a new church, the Evangelical. In order to set a good example, he himself, although a Calvinist, visited Wittenberg for the express purpose of unveiling a memorial to Luther. The edict, although coldly received, woke at first no direct opposition; and the union was celebrated at Berlin, with due solemnity, in presence of the Court and the University, and of deputations from the various corps composing the garrison. A commission was forthwith nominated to prepare an appropriate liturgy; and in the labors of this commission the king himself took an eager part.

Labors of the kind were, indeed, quite after Frederick William's own heart. After the very uncongenial storms through which he had passed, this placid nature sighed for tranquillity and repose. The exotic verb "*calmiren*" was ever on his lips. All *échauffement* (another of his favorite terms) was repugnant to him; and everything which went against his pet theories of Church and State, everything contrary to his "evangelical-alliance" hobby, or to the doctrine of the divine right of kings, counted pre-eminently as *échauffement*. The patriotic members of the Cabinet, — William von Humboldt, Boien, Beyme, and Grolmann, — men who wisely held that the true policy of their country was to separate herself from Austria and Russia, and to gather around her, as a constitutional state, the sympathies of Germany, were naturally antagonistic to the *Calmirung* system, and the first pretext was seized for getting rid of them. Hardenberg, however, who, no longer dominated by the influence of Stein, had become a mere tool in the hands of Metternich and of Nesselrode, was retained, and was only saved by his administrative ability from being absolutely mischievous.*

The atmosphere of Europe soon began to cloud over again, and the counter-shock of the troubles in Greece, Italy, and Spain was felt more or less in Germany also. Discontent again declared itself. Hardenberg died (1822), and in the following year an edict was published convoking the "Provincial States," but with so many limitations as to the qualifications of electors and the range of action, that the concession was practically worthless. A recrudescence of popular ill-humor was the inevitable result; and in the midst of this political phase the French and Belgian revolutions burst like a thunderclap upon monarchical Europe. Fortunately for the Hohenzollerns, the recollection of the humiliations suffered from

* Mr. Chevalier Bunsen, who cannot certainly be suspected of radical leanings, thus describes the condition of things at the Prussian Court under Frederick William III.: "A strongly expressed opinion upon any subject concerning the public weal was ever held to savor of democratic tendencies, and it belonged to the indications of 'right principles' not to suggest disapprobation of any act or any omission on the part of Ministers." A little further on he speaks of "the stifling midnight air of those times, teeming with suspicion, redolent with hypocrisy, saturated with death." (*Memoirs*, II. 403.)

the first Napoleon was too fresh to allow the example of France to be contagious, and, although the liberal party increased in strength, no actual outbreak occurred.

Meanwhile the religious atmosphere, strange to say, was less tranquil than the political. As early as 1818 M. Ancillon, Hardenberg's literary colleague, had said, "Ce n'est pas une triple ligne de forteresses qui nous préservera de la France, ce sera le rempart d'airain du protestanisme"; and the king seemed to have adopted this saying as a principle of action, forgetting that five sixths of the new subjects adjudged to him by the Congress of Vienna were of the Roman faith. Catholics were systematically excluded from all the higher public charges, and even the military and civil administration of the purely Catholic provinces was intrusted exclusively to Protestants. Not contented with this indirect action, Frederick William promulgated in 1825 an ordonnance on mixed marriages, extending to the Rhenish provinces the provisions of the law of 1803, according to which all children must, unless under special agreement to the contrary, be brought up in the faith of their father. Government officials, at the same time, were secretly encouraged to marry Catholics, in order thus to check the increase of the followers of Rome! This was taking the bull by the horns in earnest. In the Rhineland and in Westphalia the Catholic clergy had persistently refused to consecrate mixed marriages, unless on condition that all the children should belong to Rome. By the careful diplomacy, however, of the Chevalier Bunsen, acting in Consultation with the liberal-minded Catholic Archbishop of Cologne, Count von Spiegel, a brief was elicited from Pope Pius VIII., which, while it expressed a general disapproval of mixed marriages, recognized them, nevertheless, as valid, if barred by no canonical impediment; but only authorized the "*passive assistance*" (*assistentia passiva*) of the priest, and did not specify this as obligatory. As the brief made no express mention of a guaranty for the Catholicism of the issue, it seemed to amount to something like a compromise. The Rhenish bishops accepted it in that sense, and the whole difficulty appeared to have been smoothed away, when, by ill-luck, the death of the Archbishop of Cologne gave the Prussian government the opportunity to make a hopeless

mess of the matter by presenting an ultramontane to the vacant see. It is true that, before his presentation, Baron von Droste-Vischering gave the government a distinct promise that he would execute, "in the spirit of peace in which it had been conceived," the arrangement accepted by his predecessor, "in conformity with the papal brief." But Frederick William, in spite of his own elaborate practice in the art of duplicity, was a child in that particular, beside an adept of the ultramontane school. The wily priest had no sooner been formally installed than he instructed his clergy to withhold their blessing from mixed marriages, unless the Catholicism of the entire issue were agreed to. In reply to an indignant remonstrance from the crown, he averred that he knew nothing of the arrangement which he had promised to execute, except through the official statement of its conformity with the papal brief, which statement he now found to be entirely inaccurate.* The probability of such an assertion being literally true cannot be reasonably entertained for a moment. Frederick William was furious, and, after some vain attempts to bring the Archbishop to reason, he had him summarily arrested and lodged in the fortress of Minden. This high-handed measure was a gigantic blunder, — "worse than a crime" in political matters, — and begot endless troubles. Droste-Vischering was not a popular man, and, had he been summoned before the tribunals in the regular course of law, his conviction would probably have created very little excitement. As it was, the populace raised him at once into a martyr. The demon of religious discord had been evoked; and the Roman Catholic provinces of Prussia remained during the rest of the unfortunate king's reign the theatre of fanatical disturbances, and the nursery-ground of hatreds, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Even in his own beloved scheme of an Evangelical Church poor Frederick William came to grief. When the new liturgy, in the compilation of which the king himself had taken part, came to be formally introduced, all sorts of respectable

* M. Véron's account of this transaction is considerably distorted in the anti-Protestant sense. (*Hist. de la Prusse*, pp. 298–300.) There is no doubt that the king acted, as usual, with alternate vacillation and violence, but with a real desire to do well. My authorities for the above are Gieseler's *Kirchengeschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Bonn, 1855, and Bunsen's "Memoirs."

prejudices and notions were ruffled by the change. The Reformed parishes detected in it resemblances to the mass-book ; the Lutherans objected to its celebration of the Communion as too Calvinistic in its structure. Professor Scheibel, of Breslau, set the example of a flat refusal to accept it at all. He was suspended, but two thousand of his flock adhered to his views, and the example was numerously followed. In several parishes the substitutes sent by the government were violently repulsed, and thousands of "old Lutherans" emigrated, rather than surrender their time-honored ritual. Hence popular disorders, military brutality, and many acts which had more than the appearance of religious persecution.

It is a relief, before dropping the curtain over this miserable picture, to detect one bright spot upon which the wearied eye may rest with genuine satisfaction. The idea of the German Customs-Union, or Zollverein, is said to have originated with the well-known political economist, Frederic List. The initiative of its practical application was taken, however, by King Louis of Bavaria, who, shortly after ascending the throne, concluded a union of the kind with Würtemberg. In the same year Prussia followed the example with Hesse-Darmstadt, and a third union was afterwards effected between Hanover, Electoral Hesse, and Saxony. In 1828 the first meeting of the Association of German Naturalists was held in Berlin, under the presidency and at the instigation of the celebrated Oken ; and at this meeting the great German bookseller, Baron von Cotta, brought forward and zealously advocated the amalgamation of these several Customs-Unions, which was finally effected in the Prussian capital (May 27, 1829), amid the jubilations of all Germany.

In 1840 Frederick William III. was succeeded by his son, Frederick William IV. Few princes have ascended the throne amid more ardent hopes. The last reign had belonged, almost from first to last, to the dismal category of "periods of reaction," and, after shedding, with true German kind-heartedness, a tear of regret over the old man's bier, the nation turned with a sigh of relief to welcome his successor.

The new monarch's intellectual cultivation was supposed to be of a high order, and he was known as a man of earnest

religious belief. Expansive and fluent, in strong contrast with his father's reserve and taciturnity, Frederick William IV. exercised, if rumor spoke truly, an influence approaching fascination on those admitted to his intimacy; and to one of these (the illustrious Humboldt) he was reported to have observed, on assuming his new dignities, that "if, as Crown Prince, he was necessarily the first noble of the land, as king he would only be the first citizen." The saying, when analyzed, shows much more froth than substance; but it was not, perhaps, on that account the less adapted for Teutonic popularity.

The bright anticipations thus inspired were destined, however, to be short-lived. In an inflated discourse pronounced at his coronation, the phrase, "I desire so to govern in every respect, that I may be recognized as the true son of a father whose memory will never die," was rightly held to be ominous by the few whose judgment was not obscured by the sentimental emotions of the occasion. The majority, however, attached to the king's vague speech an interpretation in accordance with their own hopes, and their organs openly qualified it, in jubilant "leaders," as a distinct engagement to satisfy the popular demands. This provoked at once the promulgation of an order in council, declaring without circumlocution that, in speaking of the development of representative institutions, the king had never dreamed of committing himself to the promise of a general representation of the people!

Plenty of other indications followed to prove clearly that Frederick William IV. had not the slightest intention to modify the absolute *régime* to which his father had so obstinately clung. He had soon, however, reason to discover that the circumstances around him were not what, within the narrow circle of a court hedged round from all outer influences, he had been led to believe them. A marked virtue of self-control — the power of restraining impatient aspirations, and biding their convenient time — belongs to the Teuton, in contradistinction to the irregular impulsiveness of the Celt. As long as the old king lived, a certain respect for his early trials, his strong convictions, and his gray hairs, combined with the consciousness that his reign must shortly come to a close,

had stimulated the exercise of this virtue to a remarkable degree.*

But underneath that placid exterior the development of popular opinion had gone steadily on, and this development had been mainly in the constitutional direction. One remarkable feature of it was the revival of French sympathies, consequent on the Revolution of 1830. The diffusion of liberal French ideas was stimulated by the writings of a clique of literary men who, under the collective name of the "Young Germany" party, began about this period to exercise an influence over the national thought, which was much increased by the petty persecutions of which they became the object. The proper founders of this party were the well-known writers, Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Börne. The former, of Jewish extraction, took popularity by storm with his brilliant *Reisebilder* ("Pictures of Travel"), published in 1820, a work whose matchless fascination of style secured for its covert attacks upon the existing order of things a circle of readers limited to no social class. A few years later (1831) Heine addressed to Count von Moltke a series of letters on the German aristocracy, under the title of *Kahldorf über den Adel*, so strongly democratic in tone that he found it prudent to avoid disagreeable consequences by retiring into France, where he spent the remainder of his life. Börne's most influential work was his *Briefe aus Paris* (1831), which contains a bold and merciless criticism on the political state of Germany and of Europe, tinged with decidedly republican views. It was from Börne that "Young Germany" specially received its political coloring, while its philosophic and socialistic notions were derived from Heine. The literary *forte* of the party was criticism before everything else. Under abnormal social conditions, the necessity of pulling down the old is apt to occupy all attention and absorb all energies, and when the hour for building up the new comes, it finds nothing there but crude ideas and exhausted powers.

By a coincidence, at the very period of Frederick William

* The suspension of the reform movement in England during the latter years of Lord Palmerston's leadership is a familiar illustration of this Teutonic virtue.

IV.'s succession, European complications arose which gave a powerful stimulus to the patriotic sentiments of Germany. The invasion of Syria, by Mehemet Ali, woke from its drugged and restless slumbers that spectre of "the Eastern question," whose shrouded terrors none of the quaking Pentarchy has yet ventured to unveil, and, perhaps, by unveiling to dispel. To lay the dreaded apparition, Lord Palmerston concocted the Quadruple Treaty (July 15, 1840), stipulating the expulsion from Syria of the Egyptian Pasha, without either the complicity or the privity of France.* The public indignation in the latter country was unbounded. That France, late the leading power, should be omitted, as if utterly uninfluential, from a great international act of the kind, was an insult which "nothing but blood could atone." Amid the bluster of M. Thiers, then Louis Philippe's premier, a European war seemed inevitable; and whenever a European war is in question, France's first thought is to extend her frontier to the Rhine! Hence showers of pamphlets pointing to new conquests in Germany, and hence of course fiery reply and indignant defiance from the other side. Becker's Rhine song, *Sie sollen ihn nicht haben*, putting these passionate sentiments into a lyrical form, became from that moment "the German *Marseillaise*." But the most important result of the excitement was that, during its brief duration, it secured for the liberal party a freedom of speech and a recognized commanding position, the prestige of which long outlived the recognition. And in this way the party polemics, which under the old king had been forced away from the arena of politics into that of religion, to religion's great detriment,† found their way back to the more healthy arena, and the "Pietists" and "Rationalists" of the old reign reappeared in secular armor as representatives respectively of the "Historical School" and of the "Philosophical School." The former, adhered to by the king, and led by Haller, Stahl, Savigny, and (to a certain

* The motive of this exclusion was France's known sympathy for the Egyptian viceroy. But Lord Palmerston would scarcely have ventured on so bold a step, if France had been under any other *régime* than that of the citizen king.

† Bunsen writes to Dr. Arnold (July, 1835): "Our state in Germany is dreadful. Our best friends, in practical Christianity as in practical politics, dress up in rotten and corrupted forms the elements of life which are still preserved to us."

extent) Schelling, openly advocated the doctrine of divine right and paternal government. The "philosophical school," on the other hand, reduced everything to pure reason, of which the material world is only a variable, unsubstantial manifestation. Above the eternal nullity of things moves the sovereign spirit, which is alone living and real, and which forms and transforms all phenomena by its sole energy. The only true policy is to fashion society in the image of this eternal type, to suppress the past, and to enter upon a new future which shall be the realization of the absolute ideal.

The historical and philosophical school, starting from opposite premises, arrived at conclusions almost equally absurd. But between these two parties there was fortunately another which represented the practical intellect of the country, and which, backed by the sympathy of Europe, firmly and earnestly demanded for Prussia the institutions which almost all the civilized nations around her already enjoyed, and for which, trusting to a royal promise, she had waited with exemplary patience so many long years.

It was in vain that Frederick William tried to smother this demand, rejecting petition after petition from the provincial assemblies, suspending liberal professors, prosecuting political pamphleteers, suppressing newspapers, tightening the censorship of the press.* The pressure from without was too strong for him, and on February 3, 1847, a royal patent was promulgated, instituting the *Vereinigte Landtag* (United Diet), and fixing the following April for its meeting. At the same time a conciliatory edict conceded equal rights to Evangelists, Calvinists, and Lutherans, and authorized them to found new religious societies, — a concession gratefully received.

The *Vereinigte Landtag* was a step in the right direction, but it was very far indeed from responding to the wishes of the nation. In his opening speech the king told them, in so many words, that the Prussian monarchy remained an absolute

* The king's most zealous aid was the new Minister of Public Instruction, Eichhorn, a fanatic, who only needed the opportunity to become another Torquemada. Among the celebrated press persecutions of the day was that of Dr. Jacobi, on account of his pamphlet entitled "Four Questions answered by an East-Prussian." This is the same Dr. Jacobi whose recent arbitrary arrest has been so much commented on in the papers.

one, and exclaimed, in his usual inflated style, that "he would never permit a written sheet of paper (*ein geschriebenes Blatt*) to intrude itself, like a second providence, between him and his people!" The powers granted to the assembly, meanwhile, were purely deliberative, and the votes held by the aristocracy more than counterbalanced those in the hands of the commons. The disappointment was general. "We asked thee for bread," cried one of the deputies, with antique bluntness, "and thou givest us a stone!"

The first session closed without producing any results, save a firm persuasion on the liberal side that no serious reforms could be expected from a king who had shown himself to be absolutely blind to the necessities of the times, and an equally firm persuasion on the part of Frederick William that it was a mistake to make any concessions where they were only used as bases for new demands.

Such was the national frame of mind when the French Revolution of 1848 burst upon startled Europe. This was at the end of February, and by the middle of March all Germany was in flames.

The influence of this revolution upon the three principal masses constituting the Confederation — the southwestern group of states, Austria, and Northern Germany (including Prussia) — was strikingly different. The southwestern states are an artificial combination of mutually repellant elements. The constant object of political intrigue, both internal and external, their normal status became one of chronic fluctuation, — the compass pointing now to Austria, now to Prussia, and anon deflecting perhaps towards France. One consequence of this, however, was a much freer and more varied political culture in these states, and a far more intense and general longing for that national unity, the want of which was of course much more keenly felt by them, in their ambiguous position, than it was by their powerful copartners. It was by them, therefore, that the counter-shock of the revolution of February was first felt, but it was felt in a much larger *German* sense than elsewhere. In Baden the popular victory at Paris was no sooner known than an immense out-of-door meeting took place, at which an Address to the Grand Duke was voted by acclamation, insisting on the

concession of "four points," — a German parliament, freedom of the press, the arming of the people, and trial by jury. Eight more demands were added to these by the liberal party in the chambers; among them the political equality of all creeds, the responsibility of ministers, and the official patronage of labor (*die Pflege der Arbeit*), all of which were immediately accepted by the Grand Duke. In Darmstadt the liberal Deputies demanded a German parliament, with the proviso that a supreme head of the German people should be chosen at the same time. On the following day a popular meeting at Stuttgart adopted the Baden "four points," and a similar meeting at Wiesbaden (4th March) followed the example on behalf of Nassau. And so on, through all the minor states, until the movement reached Rhenish Prussia, still retaining the Baden demands as the standard of uniformity.

It was to the Constitutional party in the southwestern states that this uniformity was due. They had skilfully taken the lead of the movement at its outset, and their governments had had the sagacity to call them at once to the head of affairs, and had thus secured the upper hand of the democrats. Even the Federal Diet made concessions, in the hopes of retaining the appearance at least of authority and competence.

On the 8th March the leaders of this Constitutional party held a meeting at Heidelberg, and there issued an appeal to the German people, promising them a national representation, and summoning all members of constitutional assemblies throughout the Confederation to meet at Frankfort on a given day. Many answered the summons, and the body thus constituted, known as the *Vor-Parliament* (Provisional Parliament), was the first attempt to oppose to the Federal Diet a popular central power in parliamentary form.

Meanwhile in Prussia the dread of a French attack upon the Rhenish provinces delayed for a short time the action of the liberal party, and Frederick William seized at once upon this feeling in hopes of making it a counterpoise to Gallic sympathy. The excitement, however, daily increased and incessant popular meetings speedily raised it to fever heat. On the 14th the Berlin Magistracy demanded an audience of the king and laid before him a petition embodying "the Baden points" again.

With his usual short-sighted self-reliance, Frederick William refused to promise anything, and referred the petitioners to the approaching session of the *Vereinigte Landtag*. Meanwhile the news of the revolution of Vienna and the flight of Metternich arrived, and an immense procession was at once organized to visit the palace and call upon the king in person to send all the military away from the capital and intrust himself solely to a National Guard. In the midst of the crush and shouts of "Away with the soldiers!" a couple of shots were fired, by whose hand is not known. Immediately the cry of "treason" was raised, barricades sprang up as if by magic, and for nineteen hours the streets were a regular battle-field, deluged with blood! At last, when the troops had already mastered the best strategical positions and the suppression of the revolt seemed certain, the king yielded to a deputation of citizens, ordered the troops to withdraw and the prisoners to be released, and engaged at the same time to organize a National Guard, dismiss his Ministry, and form a new Cabinet! His pliability prepared for him a memorable humiliation. Carts piled with the victims of the *émeute* were driven into the square before the palace, and four of the dead bodies were placed in a row upon his very balcony. The agitated crowd shouted his name, and when he at last appeared, pale with emotion and horror-stricken at the sight before him, he was made to salute, with bare head, the ensanguined corpses, while the immense multitude around, bareheaded also, intoned the hymn, "Jesus meine Zuversicht," which was composed by his ancestress, the Great Elector's wife. The wounded of yesterday's combat were then carried into the palace and recommended to the care of the queen, and the scene closed with a general illumination!

Frederick William IV. became, in those few hours, from a determined obscurantist an advanced liberal. By his order the Count von Schwerin addressed to the armed students a speech which might have been composed by one of themselves: "His Majesty considers it his duty to inform the academic youth, who have behaved so nobly in these glorious days, of the steps which he is about to take. The king wishes to place himself at the head of constitutional Germany. He desires liberty and a constitution. He has, therefore, decided

that a German parliament shall be formed at once, and he will place himself in the van of progress. The king relies upon the protection of his people. He is about to appear in your streets decorated with the German colors. Let the academic youth gather round him. Long live the German king!" And amid the enthusiasm awoke by this address, Frederick William, in the very nick of time, rode up with a tricolor ribbon on his arm. It was "like a scene in a play"; and turned out, in fact, to be precisely that, and nothing else.

On the following day a proclamation appeared in the same sense as Count von Schwerin's speech: "Prussia from that moment transformed herself into Germany. A German parliament would be immediately convoked to deliberate on the foundation of a new Germany; united but not uniform, united with diversity, and united in liberty." The "Baden points" were then enumerated *seriatim* as the accepted reforms.

Meanwhile the Vorparliament, which had been summoned by the Congress of Heidelberg to meet at Frankfort on the 31st March, duly assembled in the Hall of the Emperors; and upon it all eyes were now fixed. The first question considered was, What states were to be considered German? and the eastern and western provinces of Prussia were unanimously voted such. A very liberal electoral law was then passed, applicable to the whole Confederation, and the future National Assembly was convoked for the following May, Frankfort being again named as the place of meeting. Some desperate attempts made by the republican party, in the interval, to wrest the leadership from the hands of the constitutionalists were defeated, not without bloodshed.

It was not till the 18th of May that the German parliament met in the Paul's Kirche, although it had been summoned for the beginning of that month. As the first regular assembly, with any pretension to a genuine national composition, it is interesting to observe that the great majority of the deputies were constitutionalists, and that all alike desired unity,* although a striking difference in the methods advocated for the accomplishment of this desire speedily declared itself. The two

* "Kein Staatenbund sondern ein Bundesstaat" (not a Confederation of States, but a Federal State) was the common watchword of all parties.

main parties which at once grouped themselves together were known as the *gross deutsch* and the *klein deutsch* parties. The programme of the former was a Germany comprising all the extra nationalities, — Slave, Hungarian, Italian, etc., — absorbing Denmark and the Danubian Principalities, and ceding the national hegemony to Austria. The empire thus formed would have a population of seventy millions. The *klein deutsch* party, on the other hand, attached themselves to Prussia as the centre of an exclusively German nation, from which Austria, a heterogeneous power, whose presence would inevitably beget discord, was altogether excluded. The representatives of Southern Germany, and all the ultra-democratic section of the assembly, were *gross deutsch*, the latter chiefly from their hostility to the constitutionalists, the majority of whom were *klein deutsch*. It was the constitutionalists, however, who, after a severe struggle, carried the day, and on March 29, 1849, the crown of the resuscitated German Empire was decreed to Frederick William by 290 votes against 248.

It was a tempting prize, and a Frederick the Great would doubtless have grasped it on the instant and held it fast against all comers. But the reigning king was very far from being a Frederick the Great; and, after some hesitation, he declined the proffered honor! Several motives probably swayed him to this resolve. In the first place, Austria, which had seemed for a brief period to be completely paralyzed, and no longer a rival to dread, was gradually recovering herself, thanks to the armed intervention of Russia, news of which reached Berlin on the very day before “*il gran rifiuto*” * was announced. Secondly, the revolutionary movement itself, both in France and Germany, was rapidly losing that *élan* which had at first carried it victorious over every obstacle, and no longer represented a

* “Guardai, e vidi l’ombra di colui
Che fece per viltate il gran rifiuto.”

DANTE, *Inferno*, c. iii. 59.

Bunsen (Memoirs, II. cxv.) says of this act: “He believed the cause of Germany to be lost for many generations to come. In 1848 it was not yet lost; but it *was* lost in March, 1849, by the *manner* in which the imperial crown was offered to Frederick William, and the manner in which he refused it, instead of accepting it *on his own conditions*.” The philosophic diplomatist’s predictions have not been verified by the event.

“power” to the cabinets of Europe. An insurrection which had broken out at Vienna (October 6, 1868) had been put down by the strong arm; and an attempt of the same kind at Berlin, a few days later, had met the same fate. Supported by the military, who burned to wipe out the ignominy of their apparent discomfiture in the “glorious days” of March, Frederick William gradually recovered from the trepidation into which he had been thrown, smiled at his own fears, resumed his early faith in divine right, and quietly inaugurated a period of reaction by placing the “antediluvian” Herr Manteuffel at the head of his Cabinet.

It must not be imagined, however, that Prussia had gained nothing by the bitter experiences of 1848. The high-sounding promises made by Frederick William, as above detailed, could not be utterly ignored. The National Assembly, which met as a constituent body on the 22d May, was, at any rate, an improvement on the old *Vereinigte Landtag*, and, if it did little else, it aided the formation of political parties, and allowed a few men of ability to make their mark for future service. Its want of practical wisdom, however, and, more than all, the defection of popular support, were fatal to it; and on the 5th of December Frederick William felt himself strong enough, after disbanding the National Guard, and proclaiming the state of siege at Berlin, to dissolve it altogether, and to promulgate on the same day a new Constitution, not as an emanation from the popular representatives, but as a grant from the crown.

This Constitution, which was formally accepted, with certain modifications, in the reactionary sense, by the first parliament elected under it, really contained, in a more or less developed state, all the elements of modern political liberty. It established an Upper House, only half of the seats in which are hereditary, while one third of the members represent merit. The Lower House is elected by universal suffrage. Every Prussian of twenty-four years of age, not receiving public alms, is an elector; but the person he contributes to elect is not himself a deputy: he is only one of the *direct* electors of the deputy.* The Ministers are responsible, and all royal ordi-

* This system, called in Europe election “by two degrees,” resembles the method by which the American President is chosen. Its direct effect, under ordinary cir-

nances require a ministerial counter-signature. The legislative power resides equally in the crown and the two Houses, each of which shares with the government the right of originating as well as of amending laws. Financial questions, however, are the specialty of the Commons, and by the Lords the Annual Budget can only be either accepted or rejected *en bloc*.

In theory, as we see, this Constitution contains everything that the liberal party had sighed for; and a remarkably able political writer does not hesitate to pronounce it "more than worth the blood which had been shed and the property which had been wasted." * But a constitution which has no popular basis is simply a dead letter, — a form of words without any vital signification in them. Neither gradually built up, like the English, nor even logically evolved from a certain phase of political development, like the French *Charte*, the Prussian Constitution represents nothing but the artificial combination of a set of abstract theories elaborated in a statesman's closet. To the liberal party its royal origin rendered it utterly distasteful; and the masses looked upon the whole affair with absolute indifference. But the liberal party was already falling into the background. In the new Chamber the reactionists had a decided majority; and so complete did their supremacy shortly become, so skilfully did they profit by the middle-class terror of socialism, and the lassitude which had succeeded to the feverish excitement of 1848, that for eight long years this ardently desired representative system remained a mere name.

Like certain phenomena of crystallization, the revolutionary period of 1848 profoundly modified the internal structure of Prussia, while leaving its outward appearance almost unchanged; and the effects of the same period upon the external relations of the country were of a similar kind. When Frederick William declined the imperial crown, he did not abandon the idea of achieving the hegemony of Prussia; but he hoped to achieve it *without* the aid of the revolution, and without a rupture with Austria. The counsels of this latter power were, however, guided

cumstances, is to diminish the popular interest in the elective act, and, as a consequence, in political matters generally. In 1867 only thirty per cent of the registered electors came to the polls.

* Mr. Grant Duff, "Studies in European Politics," Edinburgh, 1866. A very good book, vivacious and yet solid.

at the time by a man who, if not a statesman, in the proper sense of the word, possessed the decision and audacity which at critical moments are often better than statesmanship, and in which Frederick William was signally deficient. Prince Schwarzenberg easily penetrated the Prussian king's designs, and defeated them in detail. "Pour démolir la Prusse," he sagaciously remarked, "il faut l'avilir"; and this saying gives the key to his policy. Prussia's first idea was to reconstitute German unity on a monarchical basis; and with this view she concluded with Saxony and Hanover the "League of the Three Kings," the declared object of which was to watch over the internal and external security of Germany. Austria defeated this move by intervening herself and suggesting, as an alternative plan, an imperial commission (to replace the actual central power), composed of two Prussian and two Austrian members. By similar tactics she baffled Prussia's next manœuvre, which was the convocation of a new German parliament at Erfurt, a town within her own frontiers. This parliament actually assembled (20th March, 1850), and was opened by General Radowitz, one of Prussia's purest statesmen, with eloquent words of hope and fraternity. But faith was wanting. The assembly had no self-reliance, and would venture on nothing without a sign from Berlin. In little more than a month it was adjourned, never to meet again; and meanwhile Austria made her counter-move by convoking the "Plenum" of the old Diet at Frankfort, "not immediately to restore the Federal Constitution, but to take counsel and decide, *through this sole authorized organ*, as to what was further to be done." Prussia protested, but in vain. The Plenum actually met, under Austria's presidency, on the 10th of May, and the hated Diet was virtually resuscitated.*

Inspired by Radowitz, Prussia now tried a bolder game. The Elbe Duchies, — Schleswig and Holstein, — attached to the crown of Denmark, were, the latter wholly German and comprised in the Germanic Confederation, the former half German and half Danish, with an administration distinct from that of the rest of the monarchy. This somewhat anomalous state of things was sought to be terminated by the new king, Frederick

* Menzel, *Geschichte*, etc., 13^{tes} Buch.

VII., through means of a more liberal constitution, which was to supersede the separate administrations of the Duchies, and virtually to incorporate them with the pure Danish provinces. Against this the Duchies protested at once, with a counter-demand of incorporation with the Germanic Confederation, and, backed by German intrigue, they established a provisional government, and made ready for armed resistance. But these Duchies, placed between the Elbe and the Sound, were of vast importance to the Zollverein, and their annexation to the Confederation was almost an indispensable condition to the creation of a German fleet, which was one of the favorite dreams of the unitarian party. An interest of this kind was intelligible to all, and German sympathy for the Schleswig-Holsteiners was general and intense. Here was apparently a golden opportunity for the king of Prussia to recover his popularity with the unitarians. The army was full of zeal for the same cause, and the Diet took it up as a national question. On the 4th of April Frederick William was formally invited, in the name of the Confederation, to assume the management of this Danish affair, and before the end of the month General Wrangel had entered Holstein and taken Danewirk by storm.

Meanwhile another incident had awakened Germany's warmest sympathies. Electoral Hesse had long been "the most typically misgoverned of German countries";* but in the revolutionary movements of 1848 the Elector had been compelled to accept the Baden four points and grant a constitution. Now, however, he was naturally anxious to restore things to the comfortable autocratic *status quo*, and selected the financial question — Hesse finances being in a particularly entangled state, which rendered public supervision highly objectionable — as the pretext for a rupture with his parliament, which, after an obstinate struggle, he abruptly dissolved. The next elections sent up another, which proved equally indocile; and this time, not contented with dissolving the Chambers, the irritated prince declared the country in a state of siege. The whole population, however, — administration, army, and all, — were on the opposition side, and the Elector, forced to fly, appealed to Frankfort and Vienna, and openly proclaimed his recog-

* Grant Duff, p. 265.

nition of the Austrian Plenum as the restored Diet, with original powers. Electoral Hesse, however, had adhered to the "League of the Three Kings," and had sent representatives to the Erfurt Parliament. Prussia, then, must either abandon her *klein-deutsch* project altogether and recognize the Plenum, or she must oppose by force the Diet's intervention in Hesse. Frederick William chose the latter alternative, made General Radowitz his Foreign Secretary, and massed a Prussian army corps in Westphalia. But Schwarzenberg was up to the emergency. Without a moment's hesitation he collected an opposing army on the Hessian border, and sent Prussia an ultimatum. A sanguinary conflict seemed inevitable. But Russia, then flown with insolence by her facile restoration of the tottering house of Hapsburg, intervened at the eleventh hour, and sent Prussia word that her opposition to federal execution in Electoral Hesse would be considered at St. Petersburg a *casus belli*! To the stupefaction of Europe and the humiliation of Germany, Prussia gave way, recalled her troops, and dismissed Radowitz. The Convention of Olmütz (29th November, 1850) was the result, by which Frederick William agreed "to oppose no obstacle to the action of the troops called in by the Elector, and to invite his Royal Highness to permit a Prussian battalion to remain with these troops at Cassel for the maintenance of order." Moreover, "Austria and Prussia, in concert with their allies, were to send commissioners into Holstein to require the suspension of hostilities, the withdrawal of the troops beyond the Eider, and the reduction of the army to one third of its actual force."

This Convention of Olmütz is a memorable date in recent Prussian history. "It is engraved in the national heart as a souvenir of disgraceful pusillanimity and ridiculous impotence." * With the fall of Radowitz the whole fabric of Prussian hegemony went down, and the German dream of unity seemed more illusory than ever. Austria, triumphant, took up again the *gross-deutsch* idea, — as a mere matter, however, of individual supremacy, — and demanded admission into the Confederacy, with all her heterogeneous peoples. The humil-

* *Revue des deux Mondes*, November 1, 1867 ("L'Allemagne depuis la guerre de 1866"), par E. de Laveleye.

iated Prussia was half inclined to yield, but the foreign powers backed the minor states in their resistance to this arrogant project, which consequently fell through.*

These exorbitant pretensions of Austria produced one effect which, however trivial it may have seemed at the time, was fraught with weighty consequences for Prussia and for Europe. Among the most uncompromising members of the reactionary party was a young Herr von Bismarck, known as Bismarck-Schönhausen, from the name of his family estate. After a *jeunesse orangeuse*, noted for its frequent duels, the Count had chosen a public career, swayed thereto principally by an intense scorn for the liberal party and its views, by a firm conviction that Prussia's true position was not that of Germanic hegemony, but that of a co-ordinate dualism with Austria, and by a temperament to whose superabundant energies *action* was absolutely indispensable. In the *Vereinigte Landtag*, where Bismarck sat as a delegate from his Provincial Diet, he had consistently opposed every liberal measure, including one for the emancipation of the Jews, and had stood up unhesitatingly for the theory of divine rights. In the later parliament he had justified in haughty terms the king's refusal of the imperial crown, and even did not scruple to defend the Convention of Olmütz!

These views naturally secured him Court favor, and he soon received the appointment of Prussian plenipotentiary to the resuscitated Diet at Frankfort. Here it was that the true import of Austria's policy and her determined purpose to achieve the humiliation of Prussia became at last clear to him and modified his views and aims throughout. "The scales fell from my eyes," he writes to his sister; "I saw that the Austria which was before my mind did not exist in reality, and

* In a conversation with Lord Palmerston on this project, Bunsen remarked: "This is the result of your policy; you would not have a German federal state, and thus you drive us to throw ourselves into the arms of Austria, therefore into those of Russia." "Well," replied the veteran statesman, in his offhand manner, "the tendency towards a German union was laudable, *only it appeared merely good as a plaything*; could it be realized, it would be beneficial, and it would entirely suit the policy of this country. But the plan to erect such a monster of an empire is another thing. That would be a public nuisance!" Drouin de Lhuys spoke in the same sense. (Memoirs of Bunsen, II. cxv.)

that therefore it was impossible to go along with her." But the time was not yet ripe for translating these conclusions into action.

Meanwhile at home Herr Manteuffel and his party had it pretty nearly all their own way. As is usual under such circumstances, a faction speedily formed itself, carrying the principles of these men into the extreme, — more monarchical than the monarch himself, more reactionary than the reactionists. This faction became generally known as the "Kreuz-Zeitung" party, from its organ, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* (New Prussian Gazette), which bore the Prussian Landwehr cross of 1813 on its title-page. As a matter of course the alliance with Russia stood high in the favor of these men. But Russian alliance really meant for Germany, in her then divided state, Russian dictation; and hence, not only to the liberal and unitarian party, but to many who, although not of their way of thinking, were proud of their country and had faith in its destinies, the very name of Russia was an opprobrium and an abomination. Relying on the diffusion of this feeling, the liberal party, under the leadership of Herr Vincke,* made a desperate effort, in 1854, to push Prussia into the *mêlée* of the Crimean war. But the effort was vain, and the result was an attitude of undignified indecision, which was prolonged to the end of the war, and which so far discredited Prussia in the eyes of Europe that she was barely admitted on sufferance to the Congress of Paris, at which the Treaty of 1856, the most important international act of recent times, was discussed and signed.†

One noteworthy incident of this Crimean episode was the popularity then acquired by the Prince Royal (the present king), who in 1848 had been an object of so much popular

* The Freiherr von Vincke distinguished himself as a young orator on the constitutional side, in the *Vereinigte Landtag* of 1847. He was strongly opposed, however, to the revolutionary party, and belongs properly to the conservative-liberals. His oratory is described as partaking of the vigorous simplicity which distinguishes Mr. Bright.

† "On a voulu traiter la Prusse à Paris comme la France fut traitée à Londres," says a contemporary "leader" in the *Journal des Débats* (April 16, 1856), referring to Lord Palmerston's Quadruple Alliance of 1841. It was only as one of the signatories of this alliance that Prussia was finally invited to Paris; not as a leading power.

hatred that he dared not show himself in the streets of Berlin! The heir to the throne was much more a soldier than a politician. The debased position of Prussia among the European powers, which was becoming daily more notorious, filled him with indignant shame, and the announcement that he had opposed the *Kreuz-Zeitung* policy, and declared himself strongly against the alliance with Russia, made him at once a popular idol.*

The reaction in his favor came most opportunely. Frederick William IV. had suffered greatly from the humiliating failures of his entire policy, and from the constant irritating antagonism between his own deep-rooted convictions and the realities around him.† A softening of the brain finally set in, and on the 23d October, 1857, a royal letter handed over the provisional administration of the kingdom to the Prince Royal, who became regent in the following year, and in 1860 assumed the crown under the title of William I.

One of the new ruler's first steps was to dismiss the incompetent Manteuffel Ministry, and form a Cabinet in which the constitutional element predominated. A manifesto, announcing reforms in communal legislation and repudiating the injudicious confusion of religion and politics, which had characterized

* It is said that the Prince never forgot or forgave a remark addressed by the Czar, either with intense arrogance or with astounding want of tact, to the officers of the Royal Guard at Berlin, to the effect that they were "*his advanced posts!*"

† The great Heresiarch Strauss, in a book published in 1862, on the "*Wolfenbüttel Fragments*," gives the following sketch of Frederick William:—

"A Berlin philosopher has recently called Frederick William IV. an historic genius. May the Genius of History forgive him such a slander. He is right, however, in so far as this prince was precisely an embodiment of what the nineteenth century is, in its negation of the eighteenth. An excess of intellect, but a deficient intelligence of mankind; too much sensibility, but too little character; more magnanimity than rectitude; piety without earnestness of views; a distinguished historical dilettanteism (*Liebhabelei*) without sound historic impulse, without the will or the power to take out of the picture-book of the past a manly step forward into the future (*vom den Blättern in dem Bilderbuche der Vergangenheit hinweg einen männlichen Schritt in die Zukunft hineinzuthun*). And is it possible to call that an historical intellect which would gladly strike out from the book of history the most recent past? which pretends to understand and love the Middle Ages, but ignores the age of Frederick and of Joseph, of Germany's criticism of the reason (*Vernunftkritik*), and of France's Revolution, nay, which finds no special interest even in a Luther or a Calvin, except on their reverse mediæval side (*nur von ihrer rückwärts dem Mittelalter zugekehrten Seite*)."

the late reign, increased the general satisfaction ; and the new elections showed an entire change of the balance of parties, the feudalists being thrown into an impotent minority of sixty-two, while the ministerial liberals counted two hundred and thirty-six.

Two different methods for the achievement of unity divided the German party at the time. "*Durch Freiheit zur Einheit*" (through freedom to unity) was the watchword of one section ; "*Durch Einheit zur Freiheit*" (through unity to freedom) was that of the other. Between the two there was all the difference which separates moral action from physical action ; but both maxims were alike addressed to Prussia. "Set the example of political liberty," said one party, "and all the other states will at once group themselves around you." "No," rejoined the other side ; "first conquer the opposition of the hostile sovereigns, and then liberty will be easy to achieve."

We have already said that William I. is rather a soldier than a politician. It may, therefore, be easily divined that the latter of these unitarian watchwords was the more congenial to his views. An intense conviction possessed him, meanwhile, that Prussia's military system was not equal to the requirements of her position, and this conviction became at once the central idea of his home policy. As regent, he had already pressed upon parliament a reorganization of the army, and almost his first act on assuming the crown (at his brother's death in 1861) was to anticipate, by six months, the annual levy. In an address to his assembled generals, he used words full of warlike omen, and the speech with which he opened his first royal parliament had a similar import. "Prussia," he said, "has sufficient resources at her disposal to maintain her army on a respectable footing. In presence of the actual situation of Germany and of Europe, the representatives of the country will not seek to evade the duty of preserving that which has been already created, and of favoring its development ; they will not refuse their support to measures upon which the security of Germany and of Prussia reposes." The fact that the political horizon was at that moment pretty well restored to its normal serenity gave a significance to these words which could not escape the most

hasty reflection. But the Lower Chamber, representing in its majority the moral-force unitarians, coldly replied that it hoped to see the new army measures restrained within legal limits, and "the financial resources suffice to cover the excess of expenditure proposed, without any aggravation of the actual burdens of the country." At the same time the address respectfully urged that an improved military organization was not *all* that was required to meet the legitimate desires of the people.

One great objection to the increase of the army arose from the fact that, in spite of Stein's reform, the great majority of the officers were still taken from the minor nobility, who, as a rule, attach themselves to the feudal party, and the influence of the military in Prussia is great enough to render such an increase a matter of political importance. This, added to its antagonism to the moral-force view, speedily rendered the army organization question a leading one, and an essential modification of parties was the natural consequence. The difficulty was to reconcile opposition to the king's cherished idea with the prevailing conviction that a powerful Prussian army was indispensable to true German interests; and this difficulty was got over by merging the military question in the general and invariably popular demand for financial economy. It was at the expense of the ministerial liberals that this new party was formed. The well-chosen title it took was "the party of progress" (*Fortschritts Partei*), and its programme — such programmes are always useful indices of a country's political needs — included reform of the Upper House, more complete ministerial responsibility, *an easier method of bringing guilty officials to justice*, the abolition of all religious disqualification, an improved system of national education,* the abolition of the privileges still possessed by the land-owners,† economy in the

* The reactionists were accused of having deliberately lowered the standard of public education in their own special interest.

† The police administration in the majority of country communes is in the hands of the owners of *Rittergüter*, who can either, on duly qualifying, perform the functions of police supervision themselves, or can present to the office. In the Provincial Councils the holders of these estates can usually determine the decision, and in the Departmental Councils their influence is still greater. A certain number of them (fifty-six) have also hereditary seats in the Upper House.

management of the army, and the adoption of a firm line of policy, with a view to place Prussia at the head of a united Germany. The election of 1862 returned to parliament one hundred representatives of the *Fortschritts Partei*, by the side of one hundred and fifty-six Ministerialists. Herr Waldeck, called "the Peasants' King," from his advocacy of the cause of the Westphalian peasants, and Herr Schultze (commonly called, from his birthplace, Schultze-Delitzsch), otherwise known as the apostle of co-operative association,* and as a poet of considerable merit, were the most conspicuous men of the former section; while Herr Simson, one of Prussia's ablest orators, led the latter.† Under this new party arrangement the military question grew daily more and more embittered, and finally culminated in an adverse vote, in the face of which the Prime Minister resigned, and the Cabinet broke up.

It was thus that room was made for Bismarck, who was now recalled from the embassy at Paris and charged with the formation of a new Ministry.

We have already noticed Herr Bismarck's conversion from an admirer of Austria into her implacable opponent. The idea now ever present to his firm practical intelligence was the hostility of the existing federal institutions to the interests of his country, and with him strong conviction always implied vigorous action. For the moral-force party Bismarck had the most supreme contempt. He found this party, however, in the majority, and did all which his imperious and impatient temperament was capable of doing to conciliate it. German unity was, in reality, the common ground upon which the Minister and the opposition could have come to a mutual understanding. But to proclaim this aloud as the policy of the crown would have been the very way to provoke complications with Austria and the middle states, which would have rendered the achievement of this unity impossible, as of old. Neither was the king himself yet ready to embrace a line of conduct which could not but involve a whole political revolution. Thus this apparently ready

* M. Schultze-Delitzsch's co-operative associations are now widely ramified throughout Germany, and have powerfully contributed to the diffusion of sound economical notions among the working class.

† Grant Duff, *Studies*, etc., p. 230.

opening to concerted action was, for the moment, hermetically sealed for the chafing premier, and, in default of it, the progressive party unanimously rejected his amicable overtures. Foiled in this effort, he threw off at once the ill-fitting liberal mask, and resolved to march on alone to the realization of his great schemes. "Germany does not look for Prussia's liberalism, but for her power," he remarked with sententious disdain, at a session of the Committee of Ways and Means. "Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden may indulge in liberalism, but nobody expects that they will play Prussia's part. Prussia's frontiers are not favorable for a healthy commonwealth. The great questions of our time are to be decided, *not by speeches and resolutions, but by blood and iron.*"

The Prussian Constitution, as we have already said, embodies all the leading principles of representative government, but still wants the fitting machinery and the complementary organic laws required for the practical application of these principles. The right of voting supplies and imposing new taxes is conceded to the legislature in due form; but a separate article (Art. 109) enacts that if the budget be not voted in time, the government can continue to levy the taxes voted in the preceding session. Seizing at once upon this provision, Bismarck secured the rejection by the Upper House of the reduced budget sent up by the Lower, and then quietly declared that this case came under Article 109, and that the crown would consequently continue to levy the existing taxes; which was really tantamount to erasing from the Constitution the great principle of a legislative control of the public purse-strings altogether.*

It is needless to describe the strife thence arising, the fury of the liberals, and the Minister's attitude of contemptuous defiance. "Where the compromises indicated by the Constitution," the latter haughtily observed in his remarkable speech of the 27th January, 1863, "fail to be effected, a conflict neces-

* Article 109 seems explicit enough to settle the question definitively in favor of the government. But while this article clearly gives to the crown the control of the *receipts*, another article (Art. 99) deprives it of the control of the *expenditure*. It was on this absurd contradiction that the conflict between Bismarck and the Chamber turned, the former insisting that Article 109 necessarily overruled Article 99 as irreconcilable with it, the latter of course inverting this line of argument.

sarily arises, and as the life of the state cannot be suspended, such conflicts become questions of force. Of course, the side that possesses the force proceeds in its own direction."

In strict conformity with this view, the reorganization of the army was proceeded with, "behind the back of parliament," so to speak, in utter disregard of protests, menaces, and upbraidings. The thirty-two *landwehr* regiments were kept constantly under arms, their ranks were gradually filled up by new levies, and they were finally amalgamated with the line, the strength of which was thus raised from forty regiments to seventy-two. A proportional increase was made in the artillery, which was now armed with Krupp's rifled cannon, while the needle-gun, destined to make a complete revolution in modern warfare, was gradually distributed among the infantry. Target practice with these new arms was unremittingly kept up, and an improved drill, closely reproducing the manœuvres of campaigning, was assiduously studied, the professional education of the officers being, at the same time, raised to the highest modern level.

Thus was created an army which shortly proved itself to be the most efficient in Europe, and thus was secured the first of the main conditions for carrying out Bismarck's great scheme, the checkmate of Austria! Two other conditions remained to be fulfilled, the acquisition of a safe ally, and the assured complicity, or at least tolerance, of the great powers. It was to the default of these three elements of success that the failure of Radowitz, in 1850, was due. Of this Bismarck had a vivid conviction, which controlled all his policy. The required ally he found ready to his hand in Italy, whose legitimate avidity for Venice rendered her Austria's natural foe. It was a more difficult task to secure the tolerance of the great powers. But France, by the campaign of Lombardy, had already committed herself to the principle of nationality, and could not consistently oppose across the Rhine the "idea" which she had proclaimed as sacred across the Alps. Moreover, in his brief diplomatic relations with the Emperor in 1862, as well as in his later visits to Biarritz (1864-65), it was whispered that Bismarck had already, with consummate craftiness, won his entertainer's tolerance for eventualities, whose chances presented themselves to

the august mind as rather in favor of French interests than opposed to them.* As for Russia, her amicable relations with the house of Hohenzollern were already of old date and of the closest nature. During the Crimean war Prussia alone, of all the great powers, had not assumed a menacing attitude towards St. Petersburg, and quite recently (in 1863) Bismarck himself had braved the indignation of Europe and of Germany by signing a secret convention with Prince Gortschakoff, *apropos* of an insurrection which had just broken out in Warsaw, authorizing Russian troops to cross the frontiers and even to pursue insurgents into the territory of Prussia! †

A good opportunity to pick a quarrel with Austria was now all that Bismarck desired, and this opportunity was shortly prepared for him.

The Prussian intervention in the Elbe Duchies, and its ignominious catastrophe, have been already referred to. In November, 1863, the king of Denmark died, and his successor, Christian IX., immediately published a "fundamental law," incorporating the Duchy of Schleswig with the kingdom, which law had passed the "Rigsrad" and received the signature of Frederick VII. only a few days before his death. This incident threw Germany into a violent state of commotion, and public opinion clamored for a "federal execution" against Denmark. Bismarck at first opposed this movement, but, after carefully estimating its force, he counselled yielding to it, with the precaution, however, of a preliminary understanding with Austria, who was only too anxious to prevent Prussia from making political capital out of the popular excitement.

The occupation of the Duchies was, therefore, a joint occupation, and the two rivals found themselves standing side by side, armed *cap-à-pie*, their sword-points turned towards a common foe, but their glances constantly reverting mistrustfully to each other. After some easy victories, — too easy to allow the real importance of Prussia's military reforms to command the attention they deserved, — the two powers agreed between themselves to ignore all their own previous declarations and profes-

* It was probably in the later visit that Napoleon was really won to neutrality.

† This disgraceful convention was never practically carried out, thanks to the indignant remonstrances of the English Foreign Minister, Lord Russell.

sions,* and to declare themselves the joint successors, by right of conquest, to King Christian's claims upon the Elbe Duchies, the provisional administration of which they proceeded to divide between them, Prussia taking Schleswig, Austria Holstein. (Convention of Gastein, 14th August, 1865.)

The arrangement was strongly reprobated by impartial European opinion. "We regret to find in this combination," writes M. Drouyn de Lhuys, in a diplomatic circular on the occasion, "no other basis but force, no other justification but the convenience of the partitioners. This is a practice to which Europe has been long unaccustomed, and precedents for which must be sought in the most unfortunate epochs of her history. Violence and conquest pervert the notions of right and the conscience of the peoples."

In truth, everything looked black for Prussia, both at home and abroad. At the beginning of 1866 the parliamentary conflict raged more fiercely than ever. The question was still the same, — the legislative control of supplies; the upshot was, as usual, a dissolution, always welcome to the premier, but espe-

* The inconsistencies of the Prussian government in this transaction have been strikingly thrown together by Struve in his *Weltgeschichte* (*Zweiter Nachtrag*, Coburg, 1867): —

"On the 12th December, 1863, M. Bismarck stated in the Chamber, 'Christian IX. is the sole legitimate sovereign of the Duchies.' When the wind changed a little, he expressed himself, in his despatch of the 15th May, 1864, as follows: 'Christian IX. has never possessed any rights over the Duchies.' Fourteen days later the Prussian plenipotentiaries at the London Conference declared, 'The hereditary Prince of Augustenburg is the prince who unites in his own person the most numerous titles to the succession of the Duchies.' In a circular of July, 1864, it is affirmed, 'The Grand Duke of Oldenburg probably possesses higher claims.' In the notes addressed to Austria at the end of the same year the remark occurs, 'King Christian IX. possesses, if not sovereign rights, at least the right of possession.' In a despatch, however, of the 13th December, 1864, Prussia first ventured modestly to observe, 'Perhaps Prussia herself possesses rights to the Duchies, based upon the title of the sixteenth century.' In the throne-speech of January, 1865, the Prussian government went a step further. The world now learnt that 'everything will remain undecided in the Duchies until the crown lawyers have given their opinion. Until then the government will not declare itself.' Three months later, at the session of the Diet of April 6, 1865, it declared itself nevertheless as follows: 'Prussia has sovereign rights over the Duchies.' In the following month the Prussian government again further stated, in the memorandum on the expenses, of the war laid before the Chambers, 'Christian IX. was, before the peace of Vienna, the sole legitimate sovereign of the Duchies. Prussia and Austria have to-day acquired his collective rights.'"

cially at this juncture, because it left him free to follow out his own maturing policy. This policy was simply to realize by force — by “blood and iron” — the revolutionary programme which the *klein-deutsch* party of 1848 had hoped to accomplish by mere popular pressure, — to expel Austria from the Confederation, to suppress the Diet and all the cumbersome machinery connected with it, and to place Prussia at the head of a united Germany. Recent history supplies no parallel instance of a policy so audaciously conceived and so daringly executed.

Bismarck's first move was a despatch to the Prussian Minister at Vienna on the subject of a popular meeting recently held at Altona, in Holstein, to demand the convocation of the Provincial Estates. Holstein was then administered by Austria, whose complicity might therefore fairly be assumed, and Bismarck chose to consider the incident as involving a direct affront to his sovereign. “How painfully must our gracious master,” he wrote, “be impressed, when he sees revolutionary tendencies menacing destruction to every throne, protected by the two-headed eagle of Austria!” A categorical statement of the future intentions of the Court of Vienna was peremptorily demanded, and “a negative or evasive answer,” it was added, “would be held to prove incontestably that the Imperial government does not propose to follow the same path with ourselves.” To this irritating missive Count Mensdorff returned a temperate answer, but of course declined the categorical statement required. Bismarck characterized this as a “negative” reply, and declared that he would refrain in future from any communication whatsoever with Austria relative to the Duchies.

Now began a series of covert menaces and provocations calculated to force upon Austria a defensive attitude, and speedily successful in their aim. On the 24th March Bismarck addressed to the Prussian diplomatic agents in Germany his celebrated circular of that date. After recapitulating the differences about the Duchies, and affirming that if any conflict thence arose no responsibility would rest with Prussia (!), he declared that the only guaranty for security to which the latter power could now look was “a profoundly reformed Germany.”

In order to recover her proper European status, *Germany must give herself a new constitution, conformable to the identification of her interests with those of Prussia.* Prussia, therefore, is compelled to raise the question of Federal Reform!

The minor states, however, Austrian in their sympathies, objected to this move, and Bismarck then proposed to the Diet the convocation of an assembly, elected by direct and universal suffrage, with the duty of considering such propositions of federal reform as might be made by the German governments generally. This proposal was referred by the Diet to a select committee of nine. But meanwhile the plot was thickening daily. The Prusso-Italian Alliance of April the 8th became known, and the Transalpine kingdom was already openly playing with her sword-hilt. It was high time for Austria to push her armaments and her counter-alliances, the most trusted of which was with Saxony. She made one more effort, however, at an accommodation, offering to leave Kiel, Rendsbourg, and Sonderbourg to Prussia, and to dispose of the Duchies in favor of "a third party." This was rejected by Bismarck, who then turned to Saxony and demanded an explanation of her arming. By way of a retort Saxony presented to the Diet a motion that "Prussia be invited to reassure the Confederation, in conformity with Art. 11 of the federal compact," which article provides that no one Confederate State shall declare war against another, without having first referred the cause of quarrel to the Diet. The vote on this motion was fixed for the 9th of May, and in the mean time Prussia mobilized her army. On the appointed day the Saxon motion was carried by ten against five, — equivalent to a vote of want of confidence against Prussia. Upon this Bavaria also mobilized her army. The other secondary states followed her example, and the whole of Germany was soon under arms.

In Prussia, meanwhile, the general feeling was strongly opposed to Bismarck's action, and from all sides protests against "this fratricidal war" and denunciations of its instigator, whose life was even attempted by a fanatic, poured in. Bismarck surveyed the gathering storm with unshaken indifference. The repugnance of the king was gradually overcome by skilfully transferring to Austria the whole responsibility for the

rupture, and insisting upon "the providential mission of the house of Hohenzollern," a topic always grateful to the profoundly religious, simple-minded soldier, who is not without a touch of the family sentimentalism. Once having achieved this conversion, the rest was easy.

On the 10th June Bismarck addressed to the German states an exposition of the principles on which his proposed reform would rest. These were, the exclusion of Austria, the convocation of a parliament, the formation of a federal power invested with the direction of economical matters, with the diplomatic representation and with the right of peace and war, and the establishment of a common army, the northern section of which could be commanded by the king of Prussia, the southern by the king of Bavaria.

Meanwhile General Manteuffel advanced into Holstein, then, it must be remembered, administered by Austria, closed the Assembly of States in session at Itzehöe, and sent all the functionaries of the Duke of Augustenburg ("the third party," into whose hands Austria had proposed to cede the Duchies) home. The Austrian envoy denounced these proceedings to the Diet, and submitted to it a motion for the immediate mobilization of all the federal *corps d'armée* not belonging to her rival. This motion was adopted on 14th June, and on the same day the Prussian envoy declared that his government considered the federal compact now broken, and would act accordingly.

The vigorous promptitude of Bismarck's measures — a main element of his success — now becomes strikingly manifest. On the very day following the above declaration he notified Hanover, Saxony, and Hesse that they must either rescind their votes of the day before, adhere to the Prussian proposal of reform, and replace their armies on a peace footing, or incur "military execution." Twelve hours only were given them to decide; and on the following day they were simultaneously invaded.

On the 18th William I. issued a manifesto proclaiming "the country in danger." At once the whole tide of popular feeling turned in the patriotic direction. With the first success every trace of irritation vanished, and from the most unpopular public man of his day Bismarck became at

once the most popular. Instead of a long, painful campaign of doubtful issue, the war was ended in a few weeks, with Austria beaten, and Prussia raised to the first rank among European powers. In the following elections for the Lower Chamber the conservative party obtained a large majority; and the king's opening speech, in which a bill of indemnity was requested, according to the most approved constitutional precedents, created intense satisfaction throughout the country. The bill was passed by two hundred and thirty votes to seventy-five, all the "left centre" and a portion of the Progressist party voting with the majority; and the ancient opposition broke up at once, the "National Liberal party" forming itself chiefly out of its fragments.*

The Peace of Prague was signed on the 23d August, 1866, with the following conditions: Austria leaves the Germanic body, accepts the dissolution of the Confederation, recognizes the closer federal union which may be founded by the king of Prussia north of the line of the Main, and declares her consent "to the formation, by the states south of that line, of a Union with an independent international existence, the relations of which with the Northern Confederation would form the subject of an ulterior agreement between the parties." She also transfers to Prussia all the rights over the Elbe Duchies, ceded to her by the Treaty of Vienna of October, 1864, with the reservation that the people of the northern districts of Schleswig shall be reunited to Denmark, if they express such a desire.

Bismarck, with characteristic energy, left no interval between the conclusion of peace and the realization of its advantages. On the 4th August Prussia addressed to the smaller northern states a circular treaty, identical in substance with that which

* The present distribution of parties in Prussia (and the Northern Confederation) is into Progressists, Conservatives, and National Liberals. The Progressists, who formerly absorbed almost the entire Chamber, are now the least numerous, because the situation from which they took their origin no longer exists. Their opposition is mainly founded on a personal mistrust of Bismarck's constitutionalism. The Conservatives maintain that too great concessions have been already made to the popular side; but the fact that their natural leaders — the king and Bismarck — are themselves the authors of these concessions places them in a false position. The National Liberals desire both unity and liberty, and accept the Constitution, not as the best, but as a preparation for a better. This party frankly supports government, and is on the increase. (Laveleye.)

Hanover, Saxony, and Hesse-Cassel had rejected on the 16th of June, 1866, as already mentioned. By this instrument an offensive and defensive alliance was concluded for the reciprocal maintenance of the territorial integrity, and for the internal and external security of the contracting parties. The reform principles put forward in the memorandum of the 10th June, 1866 (see above), were to constitute the bases of this alliance, and the treaty — which formed the fundamental law of the Northern Confederation — was signed by the several interested parties on the 18th of August.

Upon the southern states, already bound to her in their material interests by the Zollverein, Prussia also imposed treaties of offensive and defensive alliance which secured to her, in case of war, the supreme command of all their armies. These treaties were for the moment kept strictly secret. The dramatic incidents of their subsequent publication have been already related in our article on “France and the Second Empire.”

The immediate general results of the victory of Sadowa for Prussia were briefly as follows: the entire hegemony of the North of Germany, the military direction of the South actually secured, and the future economic direction prepared; Austria excluded from the Germanic body, and so profoundly exhausted by her defeat that all dread of her hampering the completion of the Prussian projects was done away with; thirteen hundred square miles and four and a half million souls added to the monarchy (Hanover, the Elbe Duchies, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, Frankfort, etc.), sixty-one million dollars of indemnity received, military posts acquired (Kiel and Flensburg), maritime development facilitated, a territory rendered, from incoherent and disconnected, continuous and compact; and, finally, a prestige which secures her in the councils of Europe immense weight.*

But Prussia does not simply represent a monarchy with some twenty-four million inhabitants; she represents a Confederation with thirty millions, and, for military purposes, she can add to this figure ten millions more. This virtual realization of “the dream of German unity” is tantamount, politically speaking, to a complete change in the European centre of gravity, and as

* *Annuaire des deux Mondes*, 1866 – 67.

such it could not fail to rouse the jealousy and ill-will of the power which had hitherto boasted itself the arbiter of the Eastern hemisphere. The motives of France's defiance of Germany to a death-struggle are too notorious, and the events of that terrible conflict stand too vividly before us, to call for narration here, and we shall therefore devote the few remaining paragraphs of this paper to some brief observations on the general results of the historical events of which it has endeavored to present an outline.

The most conspicuous characteristic of Prussia's history, since the death of Frederick the Great, seems to us to be that she has attained, almost, as it were, *blindly*, to her present position; has been forced into it partly by two or three of her own statesmen, acting with more or less consciousness of the direction in which they were impelling her, but mainly by pressure from without, by the agency of forces which she herself constantly repudiated and ignored. The influence of her rulers upon the development of her destinies has been uniformly prejudicial.* All the Hohenzollerns, with the exception of the present king, — who has been sometimes the instrument and sometimes the accomplice, but never the director of his Minister, — have been absolutely hostile to Prussia's unitarian instincts, and have been so almost inevitably from an obstinate attachment to the effete doctrine of divine right, which rendered their sympathy with the great unitarian party utterly impossible. The success of Count Bismarck in his policy has something about it, at first sight, of the magical. But when closely analyzed it amounts to nothing but the utilization of forces in whose creation he himself had absolutely no part, but which had been scattered and lost until, with matchless skill, he gathered them together and gave them unity of direction.

Is it visionary to see in these remarkable incidents, all gradually combining towards one vaguely perceived but most momentous end, the traces of a higher controlling power? The stream of history displays, when comprehensively viewed, uniformity of direction and persistency both of development

* This must be understood to apply to political interests only. As far as the material interests of the country are concerned, the Hohenzollerns have generally shown an enlightenment decidedly above the average.

and, we believe, of purification. But if we look closer, this uniformity shows, at intervals, breaks of turbid confusion, where the set of the current seems to change and all movement to become retrograde. As we gaze, however, some new element appears to mingle with the troubled flood. The suspended impurities disappear, the eddies smooth down, and the waters resume their natural flow.

The present age has many of the characteristics of a break in the stream of progress. Europe's political life is disturbed by the eddies of democratic and socialistic under-currents, and her moral life is troubled and obscured by the gradual elimination of faith from its constituents. The reconciliation of religion and science is the grand task of our day, and upon its failure or success all our religious future depends. Now there cannot be a doubt that the predominance of the Celtic intellect, with its marked tendencies to frivolity and sarcasm, is directly hostile to all earnest effort in such a direction.* The Teutonic intellect, on the contrary, serious, profound, truth-loving, and reverential, is eminently fitted for the task. The common assertion that German rationalism is worse than French infidelity is a most superficial one. To an under-educated priesthood the former will doubtless prove far the more formidable antagonist. But between the two there lies the vast difference which separates an earnest endeavor to attain to truth from a flippant pleasure in sneering at everything sacred.

The political supremacy of Germany over France will inevitably carry with it the intellectual supremacy also, for which, in the spreading study of German literature, a remarkable preparation has been long going on; and by that intellectual supremacy we do not doubt that civilization will, on the whole, largely profit.

From an international point of view, the unification of Germany would seem to be, in like manner, beneficial. The immense mass of the inferior Russian element is constantly bearing with increased pressure upon the rest of Europe, and

* We would not be supposed to impugn the great obligations of intellectual civilization to France,—the refinement of taste, the polish of wit, and, above all, the precision of ideas, which are essentially due to her influence.

to this pressure united Germany will oppose a resistance which could not else have been provided.

The home results of this unity will obviously be favorable to the cause of progress. Achieved by a simultaneous, earnest national effort, perfectly self-conscious, and with nothing about it of the spasmodic character which belonged to the rising of 1813, it places political power firmly in the hands of the people, not, in all probability, leading at once to a republic, or rather a confederation of republics, but bringing the whole country nearer to that consummation, for which the persistent duplicity of its rulers and the deterioration of the nobility have been long preparing it.

Into the remoter and dimmer eventualities with which this unification is doubtless pregnant, — the stimulus thereby given to the principle of nationality, the probable disappearance of Austria from the map of Europe, and the final exorcisement of the spectral “Eastern question,” — we forbear to enter. The realities as they stand are colossal enough to fill the average mind. We leave it to others to play *Œdipus* to their enigmatical future ;

Τὸ σήμερον μέλει μοι ·
Τὸ δ' αὔριον τὶς οἶδεν ;

H. W. HEMANS.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR. — The article upon “France and the Second Empire” in the October number of this Review was by inadvertence signed with the name of Henry W. Homans. The editor wishes to call attention to the fact that the author of that article was Mr. H. W. Hemans, who contributes the foregoing essay upon “Prussia and Germany.”